

Dumont Dunes TRT
MINUTES OF MEETING
June 3, 2008

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
Conference Room
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
(760) 252-6000

1. Call to Order

TRT Chairman Bill Presch called the meeting to order at 10:08 am and led the TRT in a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Introductions

Members of the TRT, participating BLM staff, and members of the general public introduced themselves:

TRT Members Present:

Dr. William Presch, chairman; California Desert District Advisory Council
Randy Banis, secretary; other motorized recreation
Terry Allen, Nevada OHV interests
John Dalglish, Friends of Dumont Dunes (via speakerphone)
Gerry Hillier, San Bernardino County
Kathleen Stosuy, California OHV interests (via speakerphone)
Ed Waldheim, California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission

BLM Staff Present:

Roxie Trost, Manager, Barstow Field Office
Lynnette Elser, Recreation Chief, Barstow Field Office
Mickey Quillman, Resources Chief, Barstow Field Office
Lorenzo Encinas, Natural Resources Specialist, Barstow Field Office
Mike Trost, Maintenance, Barstow Field Office

Members of the General Public Present:

Mike Woods, OHV Representative, Marine Corps Logistics Base

TRT Members Absent:

Jim Bramham, vice chairman; OHV organizations
David Charlton, California Desert District Advisory Council
Sheri Davis, commercial filming, California Desert District Advisory Council
Ron Schiller, California Desert District Advisory Council

B. Agenda

Bill Presch opened the agenda to additions or changes. Lynnette Elser requested time for a budget update, and Roxie Trost requested time to discuss logistical items. The modified agenda was approved by consent.

C. Minutes

Copies of the draft minutes of the TRT's April 8, 2008, meeting were circulated to TRT members earlier via email. Ed Waldheim moved, and Gerry Hillier seconded, that the minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was approved by consent.

2. Old Business

A. TruTV program

A number of TRT members were familiar with a television program by TruTV that featured Dumont Dunes. The program, Party Heat, focused primarily on law enforcement and medical response. The consensus of TRT members who watched it was that its portrayal was very much exaggerated.

B. Enforcing Closed Areas

Ed Waldheim displayed informational signs being used in the Jawbone Canyon area by Friends of Jawbone informing users of closed areas. He urged the BLM to continue enforcement efforts around the closed areas, particularly along the Sperry Wash road. Randy Banis believed it was a better use of BLM rangers to enforce the wilderness boundaries and other closures than serving as security guards and escorts for fee receipts.

C. Trash & Toilets

Ed Waldheim expressed his opinion that dumpsters be provided at the dunes on the major holiday weekends. He stated that he has observed changes in the use patterns and behavior of backcountry area users in recent years and noted that by-and-large they are less responsible with their human waste and garbage than in the past.

Terry Allan noted that in the most recent annual Friends of Dumont Dunes cleanup they failed to fill two dumpsters, and he observed that things have been improving recently. Terry suggested starting a Fall clean-up in addition to their annual Spring event. Bill Presch said that he visited recently and saw no trash issues.

Roxie Trost noted that following the major weekends there has been a crew assigned to pick up the roadside trash. Terry felt that the worse trash problems are associated with firepits. Ed concluded with optimism that BLM and TRT efforts may indeed be having a positive impact in reducing the amount of trash left behind by the users.

D. Heliport & Complex

Ed requested an updated on the helipad project, and inquired if there had been progress on a helipad at El Mirage per the request of the Friends of El Mirage. Roxie reported that there had not.

E. Water

Roxie reported that an environmental assessment was completed and the BLM is drawing water from the river to water the road.

3. New Business

A. Fringe-toed Lizard

Mickey Quillman reported on an interagency meeting regarding the petition to list the Dumont area population of the fringe-toed lizard. A twelve month review was performed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and it is believed that when forward to the State office the lizard will be listed as threatened or endangered.

The TRT discussed Dr. Presch's data from his ongoing studies of the lizard and urged him to submit what he had to USFWS as soon as possible. Ed Waldheim expressed concern that the BLM is sitting on data that could possibly contradict the petition.

Mickey agreed to follow up with USFWS and BLM to obtain more information on the upcoming timeline.

B. Dumont Dunes Road

Bill Presch described the current situation regarding area highway repaving projects relative to the prospects of obtaining additional crushed asphalt for Dumont Dunes Road. BLM was going to receive an additional 15 tons from one project, but the National Park Service requested the surplus material for Zzyzyx Road and will receive it because their project location is much closer than Dumont Dunes.

C. Fee Machines

Terry Allan stated his support for a longer term lease for new fee machines in recognition that, regardless of the BLM's intent, the dunes will never be without some kind of on-site collection of fees. He stated that by removing fee machines the BLM is removing an opportunity to comply with the fee.

Randy Banis stated that his opinion was unchanged and supports a lease period that is as short as possible. He stated that he was sticking to the TRT's previously decided goal of moving toward offsite sales only, and that the TRT should continue following through with the plan, or it should make changes to the plan. Ed Waldheim stated his agreement.

Terry did not agree that the TRT's plan did not preclude the use of on-site fee machines, but rather to eliminate actual fee collection by BLM staff. Roxie agreed with Randy, but felt that we still needed a real education period to effectively shift pass sales to offsite vendors.

Gerry Hillier suggested selling only weekly passes via the machines as an incentive for off-site sales of annual passes. Discussion took place regarding leasing one versus two machines.

Terry moved, and with Randy seconding, that the TRT recommend that two machines be leased for Dumont Dunes, with adequate signs placed at Little Dumont directing users to the fee machines at the main Dumont area; and that the machines will sell weekly passes only. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Budget Report

The TRT received a budget report for the fees account for the 2007-08 visitor season. The report stated fee revenues of approximately \$698,000, and a carry over of \$111,000 from the previous season. Expenses were approximately \$758,500, resulting in a carry over of about \$50,500. Although the carry over is less than last year, staff indicated that there were more summer projects at the dunes than this year and was optimistic that the carry over would be adequate to prepare for the start of the next season.

Randy Banis noted that when the TRT voted last year to increase user fees at the dunes, fees were estimated to produce \$700,000. He commented on how those estimates proved to be very accurate.

E. Amargosa River Wild & Scenic River Proposal

Gerry Hillier updated the TRT on developments for HR 6156, an Eastern Sierra wilderness bill that would also designate Dumont-area stretches of the Amargosa River as Wild and Scenic. An exclusion for the crossing at Dumont Dunes Road has been agreed to by the author, and the route to Sperry Wash is mentioned in the text. Randy suggested that this mention, although helpful, did not provide the access protections that were sought.

4. Public Comment

Ed Waldheim reported that new members have still not been appointed for the State OHV Commission. Gerry inquired about the pending Desert Advisory Council appointments, which also had not been made.

Mike Woods asked when the helipad would be completed. Mike Trost replied that under the terms of the funding the project will be completed by the end of September.

5. Next Meeting

Mike asked that the TRT again consider a Saturday meeting so that more users could participate. The TRT agreed.

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting: Saturday, September 6, 2008, 10:00 AM, BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room

6. Adjournment

Gerry moved, and Terry seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. By consent, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Banis
Secretary, Dumont Dunes Technical Review Team

Approved on September 6, 2008

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Fee Machines

Terry moved, and with Randy seconding, that the TRT recommend that two machines be leased for Dumont Dunes, with adequate signs placed at Little Dumont directing users to the fee machines at the main Dumont area; and that the machines will sell weekly passes only. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting: Saturday, September 6, 2008, 10:00 AM, BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room.